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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6025

<http://appropriations.senate.gov>

July 11, 2019

The Honorable Kevin McAleenan
Acting Secretary
United States Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Matthew T. Albence
Acting Director
United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20536

Dear Acting Secretary McAleenan and Acting Director Albence:

The New York Times reported this morning that Immigration and Customs Enforcement is planning to arrest thousands of members of families with final orders of removal beginning this weekend.^[1] The report states that ICE will arrest family members together “when possible,” and generally will hold them in family detention facilities in Texas and Pennsylvania.

ICE has the authority to remove individuals with final orders of removal, but ICE should focus enforcement resources on those who present public safety and national security threats. Moreover, given the Department of Homeland Security’s track record of inhumanely separating families *en masse* and failing to track the families so they could be promptly reunited, we are gravely concerned that ICE may separate parents from their children as a result of these upcoming enforcement efforts.

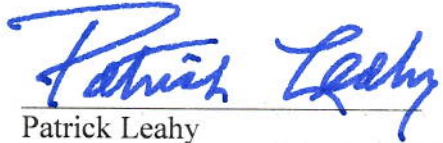
Even when conducting legal immigration enforcement, ICE must avoid unnecessary trauma to children and respect basic human dignity. Family separations – except in those rare circumstances where it is necessary to protect children and legally cannot be avoided – simply should not happen. It should not happen by design, as it did under President Trump’s previous family separation policy. And it should not happen under the guise of necessity due to a lack of appropriate detention space or the failure to take appropriate precautionary steps for families with U.S. citizen children. This is especially avoidable when the administration is *choosing* to

^[1] Caitlin Dickerson and Zolan Kanno-Youngs, U.S. Prepares to Arrest Thousands of Immigrant Family Members, *The New York Times*, July 11, 2019.

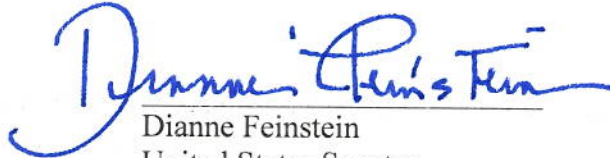
target massive numbers of families for enforcement actions, instead of prioritizing the use of limited resources on actual threats to our communities.

We would appreciate an immediate response, prior to the start of the upcoming enforcement actions, confirming that ICE will not separate families for any other reason than absolute legal necessity.

Sincerely,



Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator